has been exceeded, such cases are closely monitored and instructions issued to ensure that they are disposed of at the earliest.

Deficiencies in respect of incomplete applications are immediately conveyed to the applicants. Licences in such cases are issued only in rectification of these deficiencies.

Improvement in PDS

1028. SHRI V. RAJAN CHELLAPA: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the programme evaluation organisation of Planning Commission has given certain suggestions to Government to bring comprehensive improvements in the Public Distribution System;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any scheme has been formulated at national level to implement the same on these organisations;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which the said scheme is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DEPTT. OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM) (SHRI VENOD SHARMA): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. The observations of the evaluation report on Revamped Public Distribution System given by Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO) of Planning Commission has been circulated to all State Governments/UTs for taking further necessary action. These points are also reviewed in the meetings with State Governments as action on these observations are to be taken by the State Governments. As such no separate scheme has been formulated in this regard. The major findings and suggetions made by the PED are as follows:—

(i) The territorial area of Development Blocks and Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDP) were not identical in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. All villages were not covered under RPDS in some of the identified blocks in Madhya Pradesh.

(ii) The doorsteps delivery was not in operation in any of the fair price shop in the selected blocks falling in Bihar. Kerala, Orissa and West Bengal. It was partially introduced in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.

(iii) Out of 64 selected villages, 25 villages were reported to be without fair price shops and selected households of 30 villages without ration cards. In some of the selected villages ration cards were either lost, destroyed, torn or become unusable but households were drawing ration.

(iv) The storage facilities at Block level were found to be inadequate. The dependency of hired godowns was increasing instead of creating/ constructing own godowns in Government sector inspite of liberalising financial assistance by increasing subsidy component from 25% to 50%.

(v) The vans used for doorstep delivery and Mobile Fair Price Shops were found to be inadequate. About 20% vans were not in functioning condition and required major repairs.

(vi) Most of the Vigilance Committees were not functioning effectively for the purpose intended to.

(vii) More than 60% of all commodities allotted were lifted, though allotment of commodities was not uniform or in proportion to the actual requirement of the States or the food habits of the people. The distribution of commodities covered under the scheme was generally satisfactory.

(viii) Prescribed norms for distribution of commodities were being generally followed by the FPS.

(ix) The problems of fair price shops dealers were related to location of delivery centres, transportation of commodities fixation of margin money or commission, advance payment of cost of commodities and periodical delivery.

(x) No payment of wages to the households working under JRY/EAS was being made in kind through fair price shops in the selected States except Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. No linkage of RPDS was found with Nutrition Programme in any of the States.

(xi) There was a mixed reaction of the selected households about the functioning of the fair price shops. Over 61% of the respondents reported positive about the regularity in opening of fair price shops, whereas 30.28% reported negatively. Many of the respondents from the State of Bihar (75.29%), Karnataka (43.66%), Maharashtra (57.14%), Rajasthan (43.48%) and Tamil Nadu (100%) reported in negative about the opening of the fair price shops and scheduled working hours. However, to overcome the existing gaps in opening time working hours, regularity of distribution and communication to the consumers, effective steps have to be undertaken. There are some indications about the substandard quality, quantity as well as higher prices of the commodities at the fair price shops. A close supervision and monitoring is required for the purpose.

(xii) It was observed that commodities were generally distributed regularly but in some cases irregular distribution with long gap was reported.

(xiii) In case of wheat (60%) and kerosene (67%), the consumers felt the quantity distributed was adequate whereas in case of sugar (61%) and rice (55%), the quantity distributed was reported to be inadequate in many places. The quality of commodities distributed through RPDS was reported to be generally "average" for wheat (69.08%), rice (57%) and sugar (57%).

(xiv) Majority of respondents felt that the commodities *i.e.* wheat (80.40%), rice (77.21%), sugar (89%), and kerosene (92.13%) as affordable.

(xv) In some of the States, the beneficiaries have indicated their local needs and preferences for commodities which they would like to be distributed through RPDS. For example, in Rajasthan and Gujarat there are local demands for inclusion of maize, jowar and bajra, etc. in Kerala demand of rice was more in lieu of wheat. In West Bengal the distribution of local variety of rice was preferred. The study has indicated that there is a strong need to consider the local situation (socio-economic and caltural) regarding preference of commodities. Area specific approach need to get due weightage in the scheme for additional and alteration of items under distribution.

(xvi) According to the knowledgable persons the implementation of the RPDS was unsatisfactory due to irregular distribution Of foodgrains, high transport cost and inadequate subsidy, non-lifting of commodities regularly and timely, undcrweighment of supply/distribution, replacement of good qualtiy commodities at stock points/delivery centres, non adhering of quality and procedure in distribution and non existence of Vigilance Committee.

Hike in prices of Pulses

1029. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA:
DR. BAPU KALDATE:

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES. CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the rising prices of pulses;

(b) if so, what, according to the analysis, if any, made by Government is the rise in the prices of pulses as compared to the prices at the end of 1995;

(c) what the reasons for the rise in the prices of pulses; and